Change of Heart

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Change of Heart

by TrueBlueSonic

Summary

“Then… then I’ll help you rescue that girl and then *I’ll kill you!” Silver blurts out, before his mouth snaps shut and he can only blink at the* absurdity *of his statement.*

…But the Iblis Trigger begins laughing.

And it’s not a mean laugh.

Wherein Silver has his change of heart a bit earlier in the story of Sonic '06, with help from the Iblis Trigger himself.

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Silver isn't entirely sure how things could have gone sideways *this* quickly.

The Iblis Trigger had not looked like much, when Silver had come rushing in to spit his name and mission at the calamity-bringer before going to ensure the world would be safe. Guarded, yes, with the *gall* to act surprised and the audacity to not even listen to Silver's words, and some girl kept behind him in a veneer of protectiveness. His mission would be concluded so very easily, the grey hedgehog had been convinced of.

That had been before he'd gotten entirely blind-sided by the sheer *speediness* of this being.

And despite his best efforts and the anger bubbling in his chest that slowly but surely dipped into desperation with each avoided attack that got returned in kind, Silver has found himself driven into a corner.

Madly the psychic pants, bits and pieces of long-broken furniture getting hurled into… empty air, because where he'd *thought* the Iblis Trigger stood has long become unoccupied. The blue hedgehog instead strikes him in his other side *again*, like he has done so often in this battle. His opponent had started out more defensive than fierce, getting distracted only once: when that girl he'd had with him had been snatched by some robot or whatever, that Silver hadn't even cared for. That had been the one moment Silver had managed to hit the Ilbis Trigger in his back.

And it had also been a mistake, because the look of sheer *rage* flitting onto the Iblis Trigger's face as he whirled around again stays sketched in Silver's mind, and from that moment onward the fight had gone from difficult to basically impossible.

And where Silver had been able to keep standing so far, or push himself up again to keep going, *this* blow right in his ribcage is the one that finally sends him flying.

Against the walls of a building behind him, and then to his knees.

And then to his hands.

And then to the ground in full, a blur of greys amidst the stars dancing over his vision.

“No,” Silver rasps out, chest heaving and a metallic taste in his mouth. “No, *no*-!”

But no matter how hard he fights to push himself upright, his body refuses, and he is left panting with his head against cool stone in a dizzying swirl of colours and sounds.

Within, a “Hey,” resounds vaguely above him.

Amidst his waning mind Silver chokes down a gasp. The Iblis Trigger has him at his feet, defeated, and the world will fall with his failure, and Blaze will be out here on her own, and Silver’s body can only tremble as he readies himself for the final blow.

…Except the word sounds kind, and *gentle*, and almost quiet.

Footsteps come closer, Silver’s teeth bare; frightfully he snaps his jaws at the hand poking at the quills on his forehead. But his head is spinning and the world is muted and vague and his powers, why won’t his powers work-?!

The Iblis Trigger drops to one knee in front of him.

“Are you okay?”

“Die,” Silver wheezes, the word slurred and clumsy on his tongue. “You must- You *have* to-!”

“Silver, what are you *talking* about?” the Iblis Trigger retorts, and Silver’s world revolves on its axis and twists and loops and turns until it is only him, and his opponent, and the fact the latter keeps pretending he does not *know*.

The sight of Iblis’ flames burns before his eyes as his vision turns black.

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“Well,” Sonic remarks, “this happened.”

The scrawny anthro on the ground does not respond, his muzzle a pale ashen colour and his eyes closed. He is at least still breathing, chest
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hitching with every breath- but that is also any and all indication he is still alive. Face falling into a frown Sonic hums, slowly.

He is not sure what to make of all this.

Though, the fact this whole series of events has allowed Eggman to snatch Elise and turn tail once more does not *please* him, to put it mildly.

“But I can’t leave you here,” the speedster speaks to the anthro. And the thought to leave his attacker does not even cross his mind, no; minor cuts and bruises are easy to make out on the pelt of the other hedgehog, and the way his face is twisting – either in fright or in anger, Sonic can’t tell – does not indicate this Silver will be alright once he wakes up again. Plus, whatever that whole thing with the ‘Iblis Trigger’ was...

There is something going on, Sonic ponders to himself, something more than only Eggman’s unusual interest in the princess of the Kingdom of Soleanna.

Is this Silver an assassin the madman hired to get rid of the speedster? Unlikely, considering Eggman would not easily give up the honour of offing Sonic himself. A misguided hero who’s got the wrong target? That seems more probable- except the strange hedgehog had been *absolutely* dead-set in his belief Sonic was the one to blame for some sort of weird upcoming calamity. The Iblis Trigger, he had said? No idea, Sonic sighs to himself. And yet this Silver also does not appear to be some minor villain just out for a brawl with a well-known hero, and yet it also does not seem like he didn’t know what he was talking about...

“You better tell me when I’ve gotten you somewhere safe,” Sonic notes to the other, a miffed tone in his voice he cannot exactly suppress. Elise is in danger because of this one anthro- but the anthro himself is too, and Sonic cannot find it in himself to just rush off and leave the hedgehog to the mercy of the Soleannan townspeople. And hadn’t Elise promised him her gratitude and help of her kingdom whenever he needed it?

Crouching down again Sonic trails his hand over dirty grey fur and thin quills, grasping one of Silver’s arms to turn the other onto his back. His assailant can only be described as being in a poor physical state, the speedster cannot help but notice as his arms scoop underneath Silver’s body to lift him up in full. And hedgehogs are not

supposed to weight *this* little, either. “You seem desperate,” Sonic mutters, more to himself than anyone in the luckily-empty vicinity. “Let’s hope we can actually talk to each other when you wake up.”

And with that the speedster zips away, the anthro small in his arms, towards the castle rising up over the city of Soleanna.

Hopefully once awake, this Silver is willing to provide him with some answers.

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Stars dance before Silver’s vision as he stirs.

He... does not know where he is, he realises as a pained groan slips out of his mouth. His vision is all blurry and unclear, his ears vaguely ringing, his mouth dry and throat seizing. Tongue flicking over his cracked lips the hedgehog tries to lift one hand to rub his eyes... and freezes.

He cannot move.

Panic crashing into him Silver bares his teeth, pulling and twisting his arms as frantic psychokinesis comes to life to claw at whatever is pinning him down. Fight, he must protect himself, he must save the world, he cannot die here-!

...But his powers fizzle out as a piercing stab of pain strikes his mind.

With a yelp the psychic flinches, body complaining at his hectic movements and mouth only having grown drier. But there does not seem to be people pinning him down, hard as that is to make out with his star-filled vision-! “*Think*,” the hedgehog snaps at himself, voice kept low and eyes flicking over his place of captivity; but he must concentrate, not panic. Where did he end up at...?

In a building, it seems.

But this one is cleaner and brighter and more *grandiose* than any he’s ever seen before.

Eyes widening as he stares up at the ceiling Silver blinks, and blinks again. It – the whole room, really, the walls and the floors too – is decorated almost *lavishly*, with shades of a soft green on all manner of objects he would not know the name for, and intricate details woven in silver thread on the cloths. And outside the unbroken window he
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can look out of if he twists his head the sky is blue, soft clouds floating past, and the light of the sun makes the white-grey stone of the room he lays in glimmer...! “What the...?” Silver stammers to himself, in confusion and fright alike, racing heart not letting up yet his senses slowly gaining more awareness of his surroundings. His mouth drops open a bit more with every new sight and scent they permit him to take note of, in a timidness he can rarely recall having felt before.

He had never thought a building could be so beautiful-

No, Silver harshly scolds himself as the reality of his situation catches up with him, he has to *focus*. Beginning with the fact he is trapped; a quick look down shows his wrists are pinned with straps to the edges of some metal structure made of thin bars. He is laying inbetween two such constructions, on something so soft his whole body sinks away in it. Baring his teeth the hedgehog tries to twist one arm away again, finding it locked firmly in place against the beams. And his body is *covered* in *things* and *fabric* and his injuries are *stinging* and-!

His ear catches the noise of a distant murmur, Silver’s heart leaping in fright as he realises it is a voice.

“And yet I still think that, you know, trapping someone who is clearly stressed out of his mind will only make things worse,” the voice remarks, becoming louder as accompanying footsteps echo as well... and white-hot rage flares up in Silver’s chest as he realises they both are from the *Iblis Trigger*.

Some soft mumbles he cannot make out follow, though the Iblis Trigger’s sigh is impossible to miss. “Very well- you lot go keep standing guard outside. I’ll go talk to him, find out what his deal is and if he knows about Eggman and Elise, and then I’ll rescue your princess.”

The “Thank you, mister Sonic,” is much louder, though Silver hardly pays attention to it; no, all he can see is the entrance to the room being pushed open before the blue-furred hedgehog steps inside, and all the time traveller knows is his wish to protect through destroying.

“Geez, easy there,” the Iblis Trigger speaks, some plate of sorts in his hand getting placed down next to the structure Silver is laying on as the grey-furred hedgehog kicks and snarls and achieves approximately nothing in regards through either protecting or destroying. “I told Elise’s guards that basically tying you up would only make things

worse, but in retrospect, I'm kinda glad they did, since you still look like you want to tear me apart."

"I don't care what you told *anyone*," Silver spits back at him, ignoring the complaints of his body as he tries to twist himself sidewards to hit the Iblis Trigger with a wayward kick of his boot. Not that it has any effect; the Iblis Trigger remains untouched, arms crossed and a frown on the hedgehog's face, and eventually Silver has to relent as the aching of his injuries and the dryness of his throat catch up with him and he is left a coughing, wheezing mess.

He truly is doing *terribly* regarding saving his future.

"Dude- Would you like some water." Though, the Iblis Trigger is not asking a question, Silver can tell by his tone of voice. The psychic's snarl only deepens – in fright, though he will never admit that out loud to his adversary – as one hand scoops underneath his head and pushes it up.

"No-!"

"Yes, you do, you need it," the Iblis Trigger retorts, and before Silver can twist his head enough to bite the other's arm something hard and cool is pressed against his lips, and all his attention springs to the fresh, tasty liquid washing past his tongue and into his throat. "Heh. Small sips now," his adversary speaks, distantly. "You're thirsty, huh?"

Silver can barely hear him; eyes widening he guzzles the liquid down as quickly as he can, hardly thinking about how this could all be a ploy to kill him. Water, it has to be water, fresh and clean and *tasty* and-! "Here, I've got more," the Iblis Trigger mentions, whatever canister the liquid was in getting pulled away before returning, and Silver finds himself drinking it just as desperately. In the back of his mind he is vaguely aware of gentle warmth from the soft grasp drawing into his skull, where the Iblis Trigger's hand is holding his head up still; but all he knows is thirst and desperation before he's downed a third canister-worth of water and he has finally had enough.

"There," his adversary nods- and there is something akin to a smile on his face as the canister is put back on the plate he'd brought with him. "You've had enough?"

"...Um."

Blinking up most stupefied Silver flicks his tongue past his lips, only able to stare at the other. "I... yes?" he eventually finds himself

mumbling. “Thanks...?”

The other’s smile grows just a bit more. “Welcome. You look like you needed it.”

“...I guess.” And then his mission barrels into him like a crate sent flying with psychokinesis and Silver’s lips twist into a snarl immediately once more. “And now *let me go* so I can *end you* and-!”

“Nuh uh,” his adversary cuts through his threats, one finger all but wagging didactically. “No ending anyone until you’ve told me what I want to know.”

Giving his arms another useless tug Silver snaps his jaws. “I won’t tell you *anything*.”

“I hope you enjoy being stuck here for the foreseeable future, then.”

“I don’t have *time* for this!” Hands clenching into fists the psychic forces his birthright to take form, sparks of cyan waning dangerously. “I must- I have to- I *need* to!”

The blue hedgehog raises one eyebrow. “You need to calm down, firstly. And then explain to me what you meant with the whole ‘Iblis Trigger’ business.”

“That is *you*! You’ll unleash Iblis and the whole *world* will be destroyed!”

“That... does not sound like me,” the Iblis Trigger remarks, and if Silver’s rage could take physical form he is quite sure he’d be burning just as much as the fire demon always is.

“Don’t you *dare* try to lie to me! I *know* it’s your fault!”

“Who told you?”

“Someone who- *Who*-!” Knew about the events, somehow, even if he’d never explained just *how* he’d gotten the information... but Mephiles had shown him how to see it for himself, Silver realises, breath hitching for just a second. “I saw it in a Chaos Emerald. You, in a world full of fire. That person told me the destruction of the world was your fault,” he thus says, forcing any waver out of his voice. “So that means- hey!!”

Pulling himself up onto the soft thing Silver is pinned down on the

Iblis Trigger sits down, hands behind his head and a *casualness* that makes red flicker in front of the psychic's eyes emanating from his very being. "That is interesting. I believe the Emeralds can indeed show people visions- at least the Master Emerald can," he hums back, sitting *just* out of reach of Silver's kicks. "But are you sure you interpreted it correctly?"

"What do you- Stop *lying*!"

"Hey, just making sure I'm covering all the bases here. I'd rather not die for something I would not do," the blue hedgehog continues, having the audacity to *wink*. "Well, since you are clearly not changing your mind, what do I do with you? I need to rescue Elise, but I cannot leave you here."

"You're a world destroyer, why do you need to rescue anyone," Silver mutters under his breath... before squeaking as the Iblis Trigger leans closer and his nose gets flicked in one speedy movement.

"She needs my help. She's been captured by someone who wants to make use of her, for whatever reason, and I won't let that come to pass." There is a remarkable seriousness on the Iblis Trigger's face, Silver just barely shrinking in on himself at the green eyes drilling into his.

If he were to kill this person, that would mean that other person would not get saved...

"N-no!" Silver yelps, shaking his head frantically before confusion and doubt can grasp him in his hold. "You're lying, you're just trying to get me to leave you alone!"

"Wh- Hey, calm down. You *saw* her get snatched up by a robot when you attacked me in the town, right?"

And yes, he had seen as such, vaguely in the edge of his vision and hardly important enough to take note of, and Silver can only pant. "I can't leave you here either, you'll make mincemeat out of those guards once those snazzy powers of yours come back. No way some ties on a bed will hold you then," his adversary adds. "But if you're not willing to listen to me..."

"Then... then I'll help you rescue that girl and *then* I'll kill you!" Silver blurts out, before his mouth snaps shut and he can only blink at the *absurdity* of his statement.

...But the Iblis Trigger begins laughing.

And it's not a mean laugh.

"You know, maybe that'll just work," the other grins, once his chuckles have quieted down. "If you don't want to listen to my words, why don't I let my actions talk for me?"

"...What do you mean?" Silver asks, shrinking in on himself in apprehension. What is he *doing*?! The world is going to be *destroyed*, he can't just-!

"I mean," the Iblis Trigger winks at him, fingers brushing over one of the cuffs trapping Silver's wrist to the structure he is laying on, "that you and I are gonna go rescue a princess together, and then part our ways as unlikely acquaintances and maybe even friends."

"...That is *not* my purpose."

One of the restraints falls loose to the ground.

"Well, purposes can change. I think you have the wrong guy, so I'll *show* you. If you are willing to see, of course." And with that the other cuff comes loose as well, though Silver can only fiddle with his golden bracelets as he is smiled at. "Silver, was it?" the blue hedgehog inquires, not unkindly. "It's nice to meet you. I'm Sonic, Sonic the Hedgehog."

"...Hi?" Silver mumbles back, and he has no idea what to make of anything anymore.

A firm hand grasps at his, tugging him off the object he's been laying on. "Let's not dawdle," his adversary speaks, Silver yelping as he is tugged right to his feet on the ground. "Ya ready?"

"...I don't kno-whoa!"

"Goodlet'sgo!" the Iblis Trigger grins, and then Silver's world turns to confused yells from people outside the room to blurry shapes and wind tugging at his quills and his feet stumble as he fights to not trip. Walls and stone make way for blue skies and an expanse of greenery on the horizon before he can so much as blink, the blue hedgehog racing through the streets of the city with a speed that can only be neck-breaking.

Terror grips Silver's insides.

“W-wait! *Wait*!!” the psychic cries out, uselessly digging his heels into the ground to have the Iblis Trigger *stop*, they have to *stop*, he does not know and does not *understand* and-!

Mercifully the other slows down until their motions have ceased. “Everything alright?”

“Wh- no! You can’t just- just *take* me, and go somewhere, and then save someone, and then *die*, and then-!”

“Ain’t going to die,” the blue hedgehog grins back. “But you seem conflicted.”

“That- I *am*, I don’t know, I’m not-” Silver uselessly sputters.

...What is he *doing?*

Mephiles will be so disappointed, and *Blaze*...

“You’ll see, Silver. I’m sure things will clear up soon, for us both,” Sonic speaks up, one look sent over his shoulder before his lips twist up in a smile and his pace towards the nearby forest begins again, and Silver can no longer think about Iblis or the future or *anything* regarding his mission in the past as he kicks himself into movement after the other. A slower movement this time, wherein the other hedgehog occasionally points towards a plant or notes something about the girl they’re going after. A movement wherein Silver can pace after him, apprehensively, ignoring the complaints of his body as he keeps going and going and going because he *must*.

But maybe Sonic is right, he dares hope. Maybe things *will* clear up. And if they do…

Doubtfully the grey hedgehog permits himself a look at the other.

He does not know why, but that firm certainty that this one person is the Iblis Trigger and is going to destroy the whole word... It is *waning*, and he hates it, but despite all the opportunities presented to him he does nothing to strike. He can’t, not after Sonic’s unexpected… kindness.

And surely Iblis Triggers aren’t *kind* to people, after all.

Chapter End Notes

Hi everyone ^-^ I've had this fic in my drafts for quite some time,

and today I happened to stumble upon it again. I quite like the premise, so I hope you do too! Silver definitely needed a lot of coercion in '06 to see that Sonic wasn't the Iblis Trigger, but I am very curious how it could have gone if Sonic had been the one actively involved in that. Considering Silver's occasional black-and-white mindset, I do not think it is unlikely that Sonic being kind to him is such a mismatch with all his ideas about the Iblis Trigger, that that belief just immediately becomes a whole lot more shaky. It's interesting to think about, in my opinion! I hope you enjoyed, and have a great week ☘

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

> Turning around slowly Silver swallows. This is it; this is what he's been working towards. "I need to go back to the future," he speaks up, a quiet breath in the air. "But first…"
>
> "First part with me as unlikely acquaintances and maybe even friends?" Sonic smiles- before it falls right away as Silver bares his teeth.
>
> "No. I am going to *kill you.*"

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"We did it," Sonic smiles.

Quietly Silver stares at the grandiose window placed in the even more grandiose white walls of the princess' palace. Yes, they *did* do it: Elise talking to more people crowding together than Silver has ever seen in his life is the testimony to that. Palpable relief resounds in the voices rising from the group, the princess herself nodding and getting fussed over and altogether drowning in the sea of attention. "I'm glad we did," the blue hedgehog besides him adds, more pensively himself.

"Hm," is all Silver responds with. There's too many people here… and yet, though a part of him had expected Sonic would have loved mingling between them, the speedster had taken mere seconds to join him in this quiet corner of the massive hallway just outside the room Elise is in.

Green eyes look him up and down, golden ones glaring back. "It's busy, huh?" the other muses, gesturing to a half-opened door a bit wayward. "Let's go to the terrace, get some fresh air." And with that he's already bounced off, Silver grimacing as he drags himself after the speedster. If anything, Sonic's sheer *inability* to not do everything fast had been beyond exhausting, if comforting in a way. They hadn't dawdled a single second this whole adventure, and Silver can't help but appreciate it. Their efforts have paid off, after all.

As Silver shambles outside Sonic's already leaning over a barrier equally ornate as the rest of the palace, the blue sky stretching out in

an endless expanse above them. Quietly the grey hedgehog joins him, eyes drifting over it all. The orange of the setting sun, the peach of the clouds, the way Soleanna glimmers underneath it all…

Now Elise gets to enjoy it again too, after everything that had happened, and Silver cannot tear his eyes away from it either.

"How are you feeling?" Sonic speaks up first, over the waves that crash into the island and the hustle and bustle in the room behind them. Silver can only shrug back; he has no idea anymore. But the blue hedgehog merely smiles, as if he understands. "I know, I know, it's been quite the trip. But a fun one too, right?"

"Fun," Silver snarls back. How could it have been *fun*, with the safety of the whole world and Elise's life being the things they had to protect? When so much had been weighing on their shoulders, with the slightest mishap having had the power to spell out everyone's doom?

And yet.

He *had* been amused with Sonic and his antics and his antics. Rarely, but he had: it's a reality Silver cannot deny. And he *had* laughed, just once or twice, at something particularly funny occurring or being brought up. And he *had* marvelled at the world and all its beauty, and Sonic *had* been there to tell him about it all, and they *had* saved a person…

Which means the conditions Silver had set have been met.

Turning around slowly Silver swallows. This is it; this is what he's been working towards. "I need to go back to the future," he speaks up, a quiet breath in the air. "But first…"

"First part with me as unlikely acquaintances and maybe even friends?" Sonic smiles- before it falls right away as Silver bares his teeth.

"No. I am going to *kill you*."

Face hardening Silver glares the other hedgehog down, one fist balling and his body tensing into a battle pose. He'd been clear about it: he'd rescue the girl and *then* kill the Iblis Trigger. And now, it is finally time: he'll save the past and the future and his world will become just as gorgeous and happy as this one.

Except Sonic raises one eyebrow, places one hand on his hip, and leans to the side almost casually.

“Go for it, then.”

“Prepare yourself,” Silver growls back, anger curling in his chest. How *dare* Sonic not take this seriously, after everything he’s said to make the Iblis Trigger’s fate clear…! With his hands balling so tightly they hurt the psychic drifts his eyes over the other’s body. Sonic’s neck, he can snap that… Or a blow to the chest, or maybe the head. Or he can just tear the other apart in full, that won’t take even a second, or just strike him with any item around, or fling him against the massive marble walls of the palace, or throw him to his death off the terrace, or…

Or…!

Silver’s fingers tremble.

He bites his lip.

He raises his fist.

He narrows his eyes.

A glow of cyan struggles to be called forth.

A hesitance he so desperately tries to push down rises up in his mind.

A feeling of *wrongness* and *tenseness* and *no, it cannot **go** like this* entraps his body.

“I,” Silver speaks, tensing his hand only more. “I- You’re done for. I’ll kill you, the world will be *safe*-!”

Sonic stands, casual as always. “Do what you must, Silver.”

“I *must* destroy you!” the time traveller snaps back, but his feet are frozen and his body stands unmoving and his powers refuse to listen, *refuse* to strike at the other…!

And that means he can’t.

And his fist drops, psychokinesis almost making him stagger as it scrambles away from his palm.

“But…” Silver helplessly adds, and he doesn’t know what to do with

himself anymore. His purpose, everything he'd come here for…! He must, but he can't, and that means nothing will *change*, but even if he wants things to change *so badly,* not if it has to be in this way-!

Sonic's head tips to the side, slowly. "You can't go through with it, huh."

"I *should!* It's for the good of the world!"

Silver's teeth bare, quills flaring again as he whirls around. His footsteps slam against the shiny stone of the terrace, the hedgehog pacing madly. But Sonic had been so *kind* to him, and to Elise too. And Iblis Triggers surely can't *be* like that, so good at listening and pointing out all the small details of what makes the world beautiful and concerned with helping others and always having an encouraging word or a joke at the ready and being so willing to lend a hand and-!

And the twinge of icy cold around Silver isn't normal.

Alarm grabs at his insides.

"***Watch out!***" Silver cries, whirling around. Psychokinesis shoots from his palms to push Sonic away from the beam of light *racing* towards him-!

With a yell as he gets flung sideways, halfway in a jump, Sonic crashes against the rim of the terrace's barrier. "What-?!" gets gasped out, as Silver's hands raise up aimlessly. Because behind where Sonic's back had been turned, a cloud of purple coils and twists above the marble, a body rising from its inky depths as if it were a puppet from a string…

A chastising hiss fills the air.

Every one of Silver's muscles tense at the noise. But it's a reminder he can move, and thus he crashes into movement, towards Sonic side as the other leaps back onto his feet as well. "Seems like we got a visitor," follows, altogether calmly. Silver is not; Silver's chest tenses, every hair on his pelt on edge, and not from the spell of cold that's overtaken the balcony despite the radiant sun.

Amidst the purple fumes the body becomes more detailed, more sharp, as icy green eyes blink open.

Silver's throat grows dry at the glare sent his way.

Empty, yet burning with a viciousness that makes the hedgehog shrink in on himself only more.

"*Shadow*-?! …No, you're not," Sonic breathes, body dropping into a fighting pose. But Silver stands frozen, heart helplessly hammering in his throat as his informant shambles forward like a puppet, one step two step three, and his arm lifts up slowly until his finger points right at Sonic…!

"Do it," Mephiles commands.

Daring to shoot a glance at Sonic Silver swallows; but the speedster's eyes remain trained on Mephiles. The enigmatic seer from the future stands equally unmoving…

"…I can't." The words have slipped past Silver's lips before he realises. But that is the truth of the matter, and thus he sucks as deep a breath as he can into his constricting chest and squares it up, and his shoulders too and his head, so he can meet Mephiles' glare unwaveringly. "I can't do it. It's not right. It *cannot* be right."

Sonic's ear twitches. "Friend of yours?"

"That's Mephiles. He's the one who told me to kill you, back in Crisis City," Silver explain. "But…"

Acid-green eyes glare into the very depths of his being. "*But.*"

"But…" Silver helplessly repeats, before swallowing. He's not helpless; he's made a decision and he's sticking with it. "But Sonic is *kind*. Sonic helped save someone in trouble. He helped *me*, even when he knew what I was going to do afterwards. Do people who would destroy the world *do* that?" flows from his mouth before he realises, every word steeling his resolve. "That just can't be. I refuse to believe it."

His words ring out into silence, Mephiles' gaze burning into him still. But as Silver stares back, willing him to see it *too,* to understand that Sonic *has* to be more than a monster about to destroy the world, he…

Laughs.

Slowly.

Mockingly.

"You would let your one chance to save your world go by?" Mephiles

responds in that slow ambling voice, that had sounded so certain when he'd come to Silver and Blaze to tell them about Iblis' origins. It does still… yet Silver winces at what follows, slicing through him like a white-hot knife of scorn. "How *disappointing*, Silver. I thought I had chosen well when we met, but alas. Clearly the fate of the world does not matter to you as much as you said it did."

"It *does*!" Silver snaps back, fists tensing anew-

But a hand burning with warmth in the chilly air, moving out sideways to press against his chest, gives him pause.

"You're not the first stranger who wants me dead, but many have a reason for it," Sonic speaks up. "What's yours?"

Mephiles' glare shifts away from Silver, staring at Sonic next. But the speedster stands tall, not at all perturbed. "You are the Iblis Trigger," gets spoken. "You will bring forth the destruction of this world. You must perish."

"Hmh. Important to you that I get killed, huh? Sonic retorts, eyebrow raising. "There's a lot of things odd about you, pal. Means I can't shake the feeling you've got more motives than *just* making sure the destruction of the world doesn't come to pass. You got any proof for what you're saying?"

"Sonic would never destroy the world. Not willingly. I'm sure of that," Silver adds. Sonic wouldn't; someone who has such joy in living *can't*. "If… *If* you're right about Sonic being the Iblis Trigger, I'll make sure that it won't happen! Maybe Sonic won't do it on purpose! And that means we can do *something* to save the future. Something that is not killing him, because I *won't* do it. And that is *final*."

The purple fumes around Mephiles coil only more. "It would be the fastest way," he speaks, fingers curling ever so slightly under Silver's widening gaze. "But if you are too weak to do it, then do allow m-"

Silver gasps.

"No, Mephiles!" he cries out, hands balling. "I'm not going through with it! And *neither are you*!"

It happens so fast.

Radiance ignites in Mephiles' hands.

Psychokinesis roars to life in Silver's.

A crystal beam crashes into a shield of light.

And an ethereal scream resounds as Silver throws out his arms, the beam volleyed right back to its origin as a shockwave of energy crashes from the striking point. Silver staggers with a yell as well as it hits him, psychokinesis whirling around to keep him on his feet. "Sonic-!" he gasps, moving to grasp the other hedgehog before he gets flung right over the edge of the balcony-

But Sonic's not beside him.

A rushing blue ball slams into Mephiles like a lightning strike.

Mephiles gets flung backwards. Mephiles crashes onto the marble and tumbles, rolling once, twice, thrice, until he moves no more. And as Silver hovers frozen and Sonic jumps backwards he starts *melting*, inky black droplets rolling off his body into a puddle below that seems to suck him in, drag him down, until purple smoke coils skywards in dissipating whisps and he is gone.

With a heaving chest Silver stares. It's as if the icy cold has disappeared entirely along with Mephiles, the light of the setting sun shining with its usual radiance once more. But Silver can't pay it any mind; all he can look at is that place where the other had sunken into nothingness, and no sense can be made of the whirling of his thoughts.

"Huh. You know, I don't see that very often," Sonic is the first to speak up. Very casually.

It's casual enough to knock Silver right out of his stupor. "You-*What*?!" he sputters back, staring at the other with wide eyes. But Sonic's already bounced off, peeking through the doorway with perked ears.

"Elise's still talking to people. I don't think they heard anything."

"That- That's *good*, but-!"

Green eyes, so warm and gentle, flick back towards him. "Silver, I'm gonna need you to take a deep breath," Sonic tells him, altogether calmly. "And also to tell me about who that guy is."

One of those is *slightly* easier than the other, the air hesitantly sucked

into Silver's tensing lungs. But with Sonic's encouragement he draws another breath, and another and a fourth too for good measure, and it *does* help for his tongue to not lay in his mouth so dryly. And he tells Sonic about all that had happened: about how the endless battles with Iblis had driven him to his wits' end. How Mephiles had told him everything has an origin. How Silver had asked him if he knew the one of Iblis. How he'd just have to travel through time to eliminate the Iblis Trigger, and the world would be safe.

How he'd seen Sonic amidst endless flames in the Chaos Emerald.

"Chaos Emeralds can be finicky. They turn your thoughts into power," Sonic muses at that. "But as for whether that means I really *am* the Iblis Trigger… I don't know. Sorry."

"I don't think you are," Silver responds, as much as he can. "I… I meant what I said. You wouldn't destroy the world. But that means…!"

"Mephiles lied."

For a second Silver swears Mephiles has snuck up on them again, so cold is the chill that runs over his spine. But golden eyes that frantically flick around reveal nothing, and beams of light rushing towards him and Sonic stay out as well. "But… *why?*" is the only thing the psychic can utter, gaze shooting back at Sonic.

Because it can't *be*.

Because people *can't* just try and harm others like that, and horrified incredulousness make Silver turn right around on his heels to take to pacing again. "Why would *anyone* lie about *this*?! The whole world is at stake! People are *dying* because of Iblis! Why would he just-! Just *come up* with something and tell me to hurt *you* and then it wouldn't even *solve* anything?!" is the ramble his mind makes his mouth form, his voice rising higher and higher until his yells fill the sky and make the marbled terrace tremble.

Sonic stands quietly, only blinking as Silver's desperate questions fall into silence and the time traveller turns towards him to plead for an answer, for *anything* to make this make sense…!

But the speedster smiles.

And then he *laughs*, as Silver stares at him so helplessly.

But *this* laugh is warm and gentle.

“Silver,” Sonic murmurs, the other stepping a bit closer. “People aren’t always who they say they are. Some have ulterior motives. They make themselves look good so that someone falls for their tricks, and use them to fulfil those motives more easily.”

Silver hasn’t felt this small since he was just a little kid and he’d barely survived his first encounter with Iblis, he’s sure. “But that’s *awful!*”

“It *is*. It’s mean. It’s terrible. But it happens.”

“…It happened to *me*,” Silver fills in what Sonic does not say. That tightness in his chest convulses, squeezing his lungs only tighter…! “And then I nearly… And then *Mephiles* nearly…! Because I *thought*-!”

“But you didn’t.”

“I was going to!”

Despite how shaken he is, the psychic can only narrow his eyes at the fond look tinted with amusement that crosses Sonic’s face. “Come on, Silver,” the other all but *chuckles*. “We both know you couldn’t, even before that guy revealed himself.”

Pressing his ears against his head Silver grumbles. “I *could* have. Don’t deceive yourself into thinking you would have survived should I have gone through with it.”

He both hates and appreciates how Sonic’s second, more-discreet-but-definitely-still-there laugh does unruffle his feathers. The warm wink sent his way helps too, the speedster nodding. “I know. You’re strong, Silver. That’s going to be a huge help getting to the bottom of this whole situation.”

Oh. Yes.

Throat having grown dry immediately again Silver swallows, because… What bottom of this situation is there to *get* to? Mephiles had been his *only* lead. The only person who’d ever provided an answer to Silver’s question, who’d given *any* sort of hint about what could be done to save the future. But now…

“Will the future remain doomed forever because I did nothing…?” Silver’s whisper slips into the air before he can stop it.

Beside him, Sonic blinks.

A silence stretches out between them. Silver's eyes find themselves trained on the horizon again, and its lovely peach on the clouds and the first glitters of starts that have taken form far above. Something his future might never see, because of him…

But a gentle nudge against his elbow makes him wince. "You didn't do nothing. Far from it, actually," Sonic's gentle assurance follows. "You came here with a warning, and now we *know* something is going to happen."

The kindness of it all makes Silver shrink in on himself only more. "But it won't be enough! Nothing *changed!*" he protests, an irate gesture to the sceneries beyond the balcony following. "And now everything - this whole gorgeous world, all the *people* who live in it - is going to be *ruined!"*

That warm hand presses on his shoulder this time, and Silver freezes.

"You're right. Nothing changed," the speedster responds. "But look at Soleanna, Silver. Look at the sky, and the city, and the forest. Do they look ruined to you?"

"Not *yet*, but-!"

"Yes. *Yet.* Because we still have *time* to find what's going to happen and put a stop to it. And we will."

"…Hold up."

Silver tenses underneath that hand pressed onto him so warmly. "After everything I put you through… you'll still help me?" he sputters back, because despite all the ways everything he held as unshakeable truth has been turned right upside-down in the past handful of minutes, it's one of *the* most incredulous things he's heard. "I can't ask that of you," the time-traveller thus promptly adds, shaking his head firmly. "No way. That just… That wouldn't be right."

A grin forms on Sonic's face.

"Good thing you're not asking, then," the response comes; *so* incorrigible, *so* carefree, and Silver can only stare at the *brightness* glowing on his face. As if none of it ever happened. As if Silver had just walked up to Sonic and they had become friends without any trouble and this is something encountered on their paths that they

decided to go solve together.

“But *why*?” is the only thing Silver can ask, and Sonic just… shrugs.

“In this world, we’re there for each other. And besides, this seems to concern me no matter what way you’ll spin it. I’d love to know what’s going on here exactly.”

That hand on Silver’s shoulder, so grounding and warm, becomes a throttling of heaviness as the thought Silver can only dread crosses his mind. “But what if you *do* need to die to stop the world from being destroyed…?”

That fond look forms on Sonic's face once more.

“We’ll get there when we get there,” the gentle answer comes. “But remember, Silver: there’s almost never a situation wherein there is just *one* right answer. There’s always another way, and we’ll find it. Together.”

Quietly Silver moves his gaze back to the skies above. The sun has sunken down only more; peach and pink clouds have long turned to light and dark grey as the stars have grown only brighter. Together…

“We… we need to find my friend. She’ll have… opinions,” he speaks up. “But I think she’ll like you. If I tell her that you’re nice to people.”

“I’d love to meet her. Lead the way.”

With a final squeeze on Silver’s shoulder Sonic’s hand drops down, leaving cold in its wake. Stiffly Silver turns around, towards the doors of the terrace. One step after the other, hitching and hesitant at first, but he forces his back to straighten out. Just keep going. He’s always just kept going. If he just keeps going, they’ll find the truth and they’ll know what to do.

Behind him, though, no footsteps follow. “And, Silver?” Sonic speaks up, the psychic flicking an ear as he half-turns around to look back.

“Hm?”

“Thank you for believing in me,” Sonic smiles. “Your faith won’t be misplaced, I promise.”

It’s a smile Silver doesn’t deserve, with everything that has happened.

And yet it’s there.

“Thank *you*,” his awkward response comes. But it apparently is enough, because Sonic nods before kicking into movement as well as Silver pads back into the halls and out of the castle. And all the while, that smile persists; and despite all that has transpired, its warmth makes the horror inside Silver quiet down too, until his laser-focused concentrating on his task has the upper hand once more.

Mostly. Because once the castle has shrunk to a mere dot on the horizon and the desire has struck Silver like lightning, Sonic does grunt, then laugh, then gently rub Silver’s head as the psychic stumbles closer and wraps him in a chokehold hug, face buried away in a peach shoulder and trembling grey ears listening to quiet assurances. “It’s gonna be okay,” Sonic whispers, and: “We’ll figure something out, I promise,” as Silver nods and draws deep breaths and lets his guilt be soothed away with gentle words and tender touches.

People who deliberately destroy the world and people who lie to others aren’t kind.

And Sonic *is* kind.

And if *Sonic,* with everything he's been doing for Silver and Elise and Soleanna all at once, promises that things will be okay, that there is another way they can do this that will spare his life while saving Silver's world in turn...

Silver can really, truly, only believe him.

Chapter End Notes

> Hi everyone! ^-^ It's been ages since I uploaded the first chapter of this story, and to be honest, I wasn't really planning on making a second chapter... and then things happened and I've been working on the continuation for MONTHS. It's got a hint of a fight scene in it, which is not my writing strong suit XD Still, writing this has been a lot of fun! Exploring Silver's mindset about this all has been really interesting ^-^ So I hope you enjoyed! Have a great rest of the weekend and stay safe, everyone ☘

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

> In all her thinking about how travelling to the past to eliminate the cause of world destruction would go, Blaze had not considered it would include her all but crashing onto a bench in exhaustion.
>
> Or that it could include her teaming up *with* the cause she and Silver are trying to eliminate.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

In all her thinking about how travelling to the past to eliminate the cause of world destruction would go, Blaze had *not* considered it would include her all but crashing onto a bench in exhaustion.

Warily the cat stares over the street she had snuck into, pristine and mercifully mostly empty. In other streets she had been darting through before ending up here, cars had prattled away while citizens crowded the paths; ample reason for Blaze to have made herself scarce and go find a quieter place to recharge. Even Silver would struggle to make himself heard over all that noise, and finding him in the masses would be impossible too. Thus, Blaze had had the quiet hope she would find him more easily in this smaller street…

But it is running out, and quick.

“Where *are* you, Silver?” Blaze whispers, ears perking up half-heartedly as she speaks his name. But like all the other times in the past days, nothing follows, and Blaze is left sitting in silence.

If only they had not gotten separated.

But mulling about that is pointless, Blaze scolds herself inwardly immediately. They did, and that is all there is to it. She has been looking for Silver since: first on a beach so beautiful she would have marvelled had she not been on a mission, then in the city that is called Soleanna, based on the papers with news its inhabitants read. But Silver had not been found in either, no matter how extensively Blaze had searched for him.

With a stifled sigh the cat forces herself to rise to her legs anew. She has no time for dawdling: the more times the sun sets and rises in the sky, the more her sense of urgency rises. Silver *needs* her. And thus, sharp eyes flick over the pavement and the road, plotting out what direction she has not yet explored that could reasonably, feasibly be where Silver went to as well. And despite the ache in Blaze's legs and the lightness in her head, she *will* keep going to find him. Even if Silver would probably be out of his mind with worry if she were to tell him that she has been running around looking for him for days now…

But she must keep going, because this situation is getting altogether *concerning*, Blaze steels her resolve.

Smoothing out her clothes as she looks around the cat ponders. She has been avoiding the townspeople as best she could, her flames going unused in the streets and her acknowledgements of the citizens kept to little nods and otherwise-averted eyes. But perhaps she has to bite the bullet and go up to someone who looks reliable, who might know if anyone has seen a grey hedgehog around. Maybe one of the guards spread over this island, who protect the exits and entryways to various other regions; surely they will remember if they saw someone like Silver come by-

Or someone like a hedgehog with a fur of *blue*.

Who comes crossing around a corner a few dozen yards away and saunters right onto the street, as Blaze has taken nary two steps forward.

Blaze freezes.

The hedgehog, a dot on the horizon, does too.

And then he waves.

And breaks into a run.

Towards her.

For an alleged Iblis Trigger that Silver must destroy to save the whole world, Blaze thinks, this hedgehog conducts himself with a *remarkable* confidence.

That confidence also shines in every movement, every expression, every gesture of the hedgehog, as he skids to a halt in front of her. “Hey!” he greets her, casual as can be. “Good to see you.”

Blaze raises an eyebrow.

A thumb jots over a blue shoulder, just as callous as everything else about the hedgehog. “Silver is looking for a purple cat over there.”

A flinch, that Blaze cannot suppress in time, jolts through her body.

How, is the first question that comes up in her. How does this hedgehog know Silver’s name? How is he still *alive* with Silver having set out to destroy him? Because this *is* the Iblis Trigger, surely. How many blue hedgehogs are out there? On an island Mephiles brought them to, with barely any other anthros on top? But for this hedgehog to know Silver’s name, Silver must have told him, which means they must have met. Must have *fought*. Blaze knows Silver well enough to be certain he would have thrown himself headfirst into a battle with any potential Iblis Trigger the moment they encountered each other.

And yet the hedgehog extends a gloved hand in her direction. “I’m Sonic. Sonic the Hedgehog!” gets *winked*, with a full, unmistakeable authenticity that leaves Blaze reeling only more.

Answers.

“How do you know Silver?” Blaze asks, pushing her own hands against her hips more tautly. She refuses to shake *anything* until she has discerned the truth of this matter.

Sonic the Hedgehog, mercifully, does not try to grab at her and drops his arm instead. “We met in a square in the old part of town and we fought. I knocked him unconscious- Sorry 'bout that,” the explanation comes, and worry and dread alike tense in Blaze’s chest more tautly with every word spoken. Silver had been hurt…! And yet this hedgehog talks calm as can be still. “But because he attacked me, the Princess got kidnapped by Eggman – that's a villain who threatens the world a lot – and so I took Silver to her castle to recover. And then we set out to find the Princess together, which we did, and *then* we got attacked by a shadow-like creature named Mephiles.”

Blaze’s lips remain firmly pursed together as she lets it all sink in. “Silver went with me willingly,” Sonic adds, a little laugh following. “He’s a spirited guy, isn’t he? We’d been asking around if someone had seen a purple cat in the city, and he ran off the *moment* we got a yes, and he’s been tearing up the whole place since then… but just not in the right street.”

If Sonic is speaking the truth, Blaze could surely see cyan-coated

objects be flung around aplenty on the horizon should she squint in that direction. But she does not trust he is, and thus she keeps her eyes right on the Iblis Trigger instead. “You met Mephiles,” she prods at the last thing stated, Sonic nodding.

“He attacked us. Silver saved me.”

“Silver went to the past to destroy you. *Saving* you,” Blaze brings up with a deliberate slowness, “seems counterproductive to that goal.”

“Yes, about that.” Something deeply serious crosses Sonic’s face, any playful creasing around his eyes and twitch of his lips dissipating before Blaze can so much as blink. “The Iblis Trigger, he called it. The future is about to be destroyed by something because of that Trigger, if I understood correctly.”

“So Silver and I were told. *And* we were told a blue hedgehog is to blame.”

“And that hedgehog could very well be me," Sonic nods. "But in my opinion, though keep in mind I am probably biased because it *is* my life on the line here, Mephiles lied to you.”

Slowly Blaze balls a fist. That is precisely what anyone about to be prosecuted for the sake of the world would say, she is certain. But this Sonic *does* know who Silver is and plenty of other things too. So they either fought and Silver perished, or Sonic is telling the truth after all…

And the “**Sonic, where *are* you?!**” that echoes in the distance with a volume as if Silver is standing right beside Blaze answers that question quickly enough.

“Here he comes,” Sonic chuckles, as Blaze’s body flinches anew. Footsteps pick up at the corner that Sonic had rounded as well-!

And a grey hedgehog coated in cyan comes rushing past, eyes narrowed and fists balled. Though, his whole body, his legs and arms and quills, flail in a jolt as his eyes meet Blaze’s.

“Blaze-! *Blaze!! **Blaze!***”

“Silver,” Blaze breathes, standing frozen, her arms opening by instinct as Silver becomes a blur of cyan-!

And the cat yelping as the full weight of a teenage hedgehog crashes

into her, and she gets flung backwards and picked up and twirled around all at the same time. "*You're okay!!*" Silver cries right beside her head, making her poor eardrums quiver.

"Er, yes," Blaze helplessly manages to bring out in his grasp. "Put me down."

Mercifully Silver heeds that demand, her feet landing gently on the ground again immediately. "Blaze, Sonic's not the Iblis Trigger- That is, we don't *know* if he's the Iblis Trigger, but he's not a bad guy. He's really kind," gets explained in a single breath. "So don't hurt him!"

"I was not planning to… *yet*," Blaze responds.

Silver frowns at her. Sonic makes a sound as if he is hiding an amused hum in a cough. Blaze lashes her tail. "So much has happened," Silver tells her, clasping her hand with his usual utter disregard for the fact Blaze's flames could hurt him. "I fought Sonic and he knocked me out, and the princess got kidnapped, and Sonic took me to a palace and I told him I'd help him rescue that girl and *then* kill him, and we rescued her and then I tried to kill Sonic but I couldn't and-!"

"*Breathing*," Blaze interrupts, before Silver runs out of oxygen. "Why could you not?"

"Because Sonic is kind," the simple response comes. "Because he was kind to me. Iblis Triggers aren't kind, I'm sure."

Blaze blinks, and stares, and processes, and then grimaces.

Because it is a response made of *nonsense*.

It is a response like only Silver could give.

It is a response that tugs at Blaze's heartstrings more than she is willing to admit.

It is a response that makes her look up and *see* Sonic, standing there as he leans his weight on one leg and listens with little nods. "Then Mephiles came, when we were at the castle again," the blue hedgehog continues. "He attacked from behind. If Silver hadn't pushed me out of the way, he might well have hit me."

"That's not true. You were already jumping to the side," Silver retorts. "But… Yes, Mephiles. Sonic says he…!"

A silence unfurls, in which Blaze glares Sonic down. Mephiles lied, so Sonic had said… and Sonic nods anew, a grave seriousness twisting his features. “He *must* have lied to you. There’s too much not adding up around what he says, and too many things he hasn’t said at all. There’s something far bigger going on that what he told you both.”

Blaze turns back towards Silver.

“I think so too,” her friend nods, face falling into a look of *grief*. Of an inability to understand, to grasp the situation; of a helplessness so strong it leaves Blaze herself reeling too. Because Silver never lies; because Silver did not for a single second consider the possibility that someone could have been lying to *him*.

That leaves the three of them standing, Silver’s fist balled and Sonic’s eyes going from him to Blaze and back again, and Blaze flicking her tail slowly. “Tell me everything,” she is the first to break their silence, gesturing to the bench she had been resting on… before yelping anew as Silver picks her right up, marching over to it with her bungling two inches above the ground. “Silver, I am *fine*!”

“You’re okay when I say you are,” the incorrigible response comes. And Blaze cannot say much about that, because that is her go-to for every single time Silver gets hurt instead. She *can* shoot him a look as he sets her down onto the couch like she is made of glass before plopping down on it too with a grunt, but that does not seem to get noticed. Instead Silver looks at Sonic, who saunters over as well before flopping down in front of them on the pavement, legs crossing underneath.

And he talks, and Silver does too: about how they had fought, about this princess of Soleanna that that villain had been chasing after, about teaming up and rescuing her. About what Silver had felt and experienced, what Sonic had said and seen.

About Mephiles, and his attack. And all the while Blaze listens in silence, face sinking in a deeper frown at every sentence.

“I see,” she succinctly concludes when Silver is done talking and no addendums from Sonic get added anymore either. She has no reason to distrust what her dear friend is telling her: Silver does not lie about anything, ever. “That is quite the situation we are in.”

"I don't know if I am your Iblis Trigger or not," Sonic tells her. "Silver said he saw me in a Chaos Emerald surrounded by flames, which has to mean *something*... but I don't know what. All I can tell you is that I'd

never willingly destroy the world."

“I believe that. And I told Sonic that we had to find you,” Silver adds in a murmur, hand giving Blaze's a squeeze. “You always know what to do.”

Blaze really, absolutely, truly does not.

But Silver needs her.

“The princess of Soleanna and the villain chasing after her,” is the first thought that pops into her mind: Elise and Eggman had been mentioned multiple times in the story. “Why is this Eggman interested in the princess of a small island like this place?”

Sonic frowns deeply. “I don’t know. But if there’s any guy out there who’d gladly destroy the world, it’s him.”

“Iblis destroyed the world,” Blaze remarks dryly. “If Eggman managed to unleash Iblis, he certainly succeeded.”

“Well, Eggman wants to *rule* a destroyed world most of all,” Sonic chuckles…

Before it dissipates and he falls silent.

“Actually…” follows altogether slowly. A little chill runs over Blaze's back at the shift in tone, and the gravity with which Sonic looks up at the sky. “Silver, Blaze, what is your world *like*? It’s destroyed by this Iblis, but what *is* Iblis? Silver, you said something about fire?”

Silver’s fists tense so tautly it makes Blaze wince. “Iblis’ entire being is made of fire, and he burned up the entire world,” the psychic growls lowly. “He cannot be destroyed for good, only temporarily defeated. I’ve been fighting him forever, and Blaze has helped me since the day we met. She can feel his flames… The people of our city call also call him the Flames of Disaster.”

“Flames of Disaster,” Sonic muses, and Blaze’s breath hitches in her chest as green eyes flick down again to stare at them both. “Eggman said he’d keep Elise captive until he had figured out the secret of the Flames of Disaster.”

Silver flinches so strongly Blaze recoils too.

“***Iblis!** That’s Iblis!”* the hedgehog hollers at the top of his lungs, as

Blaze mentally thanks whatever benevolent gods are out there for having put the three of them in an *empty* street. Her friend scrambles up, fists balled. “If Eggman is trying to find out the secret of the Flames of Disaster, then maybe *he*-!”

“Easy, Silver. Blaze is gonna go deaf like this,” Sonic cuts through his yells with a *smile*.

And under Blaze’s widening eyes, Silver *does* swallow in the rest of his cry, most promptly.

“Sorry,” the hedgehog mutters instead, leaning sideways to bonk his forehead against Blaze’s gently. Though, the quiet is short-lived; the fires of passion and justice light themselves in Silver’s eyes again nary a second later. “But we need to go to him ***right now***!”

“Well, it’s as good a lead as any. With Elise safe in the castle, we’ve got ample time for a *very* friendly chat with good ol’ Doc,” the blue hedgehog winks.

Under his breath Silver grumbles some things about how the chat is not at all going to be friendly and about how he *will* commit a murder if he has to, though Blaze knows better than to delve into that. “Do you know what way to go?” she asks Sonic instead, who nods.

“Eggman’s got a base in the mountains there. Want to come along too?”

“Blaze *is* coming along! Whether you like it or not,” Silver interrupts himself immediately, spiking right up indignantly.

But Sonic’s eyes twinkle. “Of course I'd like it! A friend of a friend is a friend. And I’d be happy to get to know you better, Blaze.”

“Likewise,” the cat nods curtly. Gracefully she lifts herself to her feet once more, clothes smoothed out anew too. Sitting for minutes more made for the breather she needed. But this time Silver is right beside her as well, ready to catch her should she so much as sway. Blaze can only hope he knows the quiet appreciation she has for his worrying that she could never put into words.

And yet…

There is something *different* about Silver. And it all has to do with that blue hedgehog. Quietly Blaze sifts through her memories, before concluding not a single one of them has Silver *listening* to anyone

except her telling him to pipe down.

And yet he listened to Sonic.

And he hangs onto Sonic's every word as the speedster gestures to the mountains and discusses how to get there as quick as possible.

And something about how he looks at Sonic gives Blaze pause.

It is not how Silver looks at her. She has known Silver for months *at least*, if not years, difficult as that was to tell in the burning ruins of Crisis City. She could draw out the way he regards her in her sleep. That is with reverence, with a tender delight that could not contrast the fears the few survivors of Crisis City have about her more strongly. His best friend, Silver had denoted her remarkably shortly after they had met. And he looks like that at her still, and he worries about her still, but…

Silver's golden eyes avert themselves from Sonic, the psychic nodding firmly. "Let's go! There's no time to waste! We need to save the world!!"

And with that he turns around and blasts off, coated in cyan, and Blaze is left standing by the bench as Sonic is too.

"Heh. Spirited guy," Sonic succinctly concludes.

Blaze's arms cross. Whatever Sonic had talked about, she missed it in her pondering. And Sonic regards her as if he knows that… but he does not seem mad about it either.

Instead a laugh plays on his lips, as radiant as the sun above.

Silver is drawn to radiance, the realisation strikes Blaze like lightning. Silver is drawn to the bright, the luminous, the glowing, the warm. Perhaps it is why he was drawn to her flames, she had always pondered but never dared ask.

But it certainly could be why he is so drawn to *Sonic*.

Who smiles still, more brilliant than beams of light that colour the heavens their light blue. "Silver is fond of you, I can tell."

"Silver is fond of *you*," the response comes out of Blaze's mouth before she can help it.

Green eyes blink. "You think so? We've been hanging out for a couple

of days now, but he's got a lot on his mind."

"It seems that way to me. However, we must focus." And whatever is going on between Sonic and Silver, Blaze can ask about when everything is over and done. For now she merely smiles ever so lightly as Silver comes rushing back, madly gesturing for her and Sonic to get moving, and she easily falls in line a little behind him, where she always is.

But this time someone else walks beside her, at Silver's other shoulder.

In all her thinking about how travelling to the past to eliminate the cause of world destruction would go, Blaze had not considered it would include her all but crashing onto a bench in exhaustion.

She had considered even less that she would be teaming up *with* said cause to protect the world.

The absurdity of it almost makes her laugh. And Sonic *actually* laughs as he looks at her, which makes Silver looks over his shoulder and regard them both with his naïve curiosity that Blaze adores so much, and that finally makes a full, true smile crack on her face in turn.

And they will figure it out, she is certain. She cannot be anything else but certain, somehow. Because Silver is right: Sonic is kind. And that kindness, that gentleness, that openness that Sonic has shown makes that Blaze does not want to destroy him either; another realisation that strikes her like lightning. Even if Blaze cannot say anything about whether kind people can be Iblis Triggers or not, and even though she and Silver swore to save the world at any price, if it means coming at the expense of Sonic and how kindly he treated Silver...

She will not let a future wherein Sonic has to suffer come to pass, Blaze quietly resolves. For Sonic and Silver alike.

And it is with that quiet promise that she follows them, into more uncertainty than she could ever have considered, and yet somehow, she feels wary no more.

Chapter End Notes

> I've been on a Rush and Rush Adventure spree the last few days and Blaze is my BABY. I fuckin' love Blaze. Blaze is absolutely amazing <3 <3 <3 So I wanted to write a fic with her, and then this one came looming closer and I was like "why not?" XD I hope you enjoyed! 🍀

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